# ASSESSEMENT OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE AMONG JOURNALISTS IN SELECTED BROADCAST STATIONS IN ABEOKUTA, OGUN STATE

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**Abstract**

*This study examined the staff development practice among journalists in selected broadcast stations in Abeokuta. The study among other objectives examined the regularity of staff development and training carried out in selected radio stations alongside factors responsible for staff development in the selected stations. Survey method was adopted while total population sampling and quota sampling technique was used to select respondents from Family, Sweet, and OGBC radio stations. Findings from the study revealed that more than average (56%) respondents affirmed that the condition of staff development was fair enough. Results also indicated that the majority (83%) acknowledged that staff development is once a year in their stations while the majority (67%) have never benefited from the staff development programme in their stations. The study, however, recommended that, broadcast stations should provide adequate training and developmental programmes for its workforce regularly to enhance productivity and avoid breach of ethical standards.*

**Keywords**: Staff Development Practice, Journalism, Broadcast Media

## Introduction

There is no gainsaying that human capital remains the most crucial asset of any organization. In fact, it is a critical determinant of success or otherwise of the production of media organizations. For instance, man, in broadcast stations are in-charge of news production and packages, transmission, marketing, administrative, account, etc on different belts all day long. Therefore, without human capital (Man) other 5Ms & T as related to media (Money, Machines, Materials, Method, Milieu, and Time) are useless. It is on this note, Aina (2003) argues that amongst the 5Ms in any organization; 'Man' seems to be the most important asset. While Obi-Anike and Ekwe (2014) submit that manpower remains the foundation upon which other resources rest and a vital means of transforming other resources to the use and benefits of man.

To Armstrong (2009), human capital development has a significant role in the economic development in most successful organisations while Nda and Fard (2013) believe that, the best way to ascertain good and bad organisation is through their human capital development programmes. The above reflects the indispensability of man to successes or otherwise in any organisation. Without him, other assets in the organisation are worthless and useless. To this end, man is an exceptional cause of any action in the production line. If manpower is acknowledged as a source of undesirable effect in any organisation, the likelihood of him being a factor of another of the 5ms & T is inevitable.

Human capital is very essential in the productivity of any organisations, this could be the reason why different organisations place a premium on the development and training of their employees on a time basis, so, as to meet up with global best practices. Undoubtedly, journalism remains a skilled and craft profession that continues to attract attention from the public. This attention makes it attractive to all and sundry from other disciplines. The attention also attributed to the influx of those who do have a journalism background, working at different media organisations as a result of their interest, skills and other qualities considered vital to the effective and efficient media productions.

In fact, the proliferation of both private and public higher institutions of learning increased the teaching of mass communication and or related courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate, thereby turning out graduates of Mass Communication, journalism, media, and communication technology as the case may be. Of course, the interest has added to the numbers of private FM radio stations operating in Ogun State. For instance, in Abeokuta, only Ogun State Broadcasting Cooperation (OGBC) and lately Paramount FM is known, but in December 2008, Rock city, as the first private FM radio station was debuted. Since then, over six (6) private FM radio stations now in operation in Abeokuta and the number continue to grow.

For these skilled personnel to function optimally in this industry, to avoid litigations of any sort, and for their organisations to be credible in the information dissemination process; training and development of personnel become inevitable for the survival and growth of the media organizations. Staff development practice in this sense refers to the process leading to the acquisition of knowledge and learning of new skills different from the ones earlier acquired for the purposes and benefit of growth. Staff development practice is a key function of Human Resource (HR) department. This department is accountable for a variety of activities across a number of core organisational functions in many organisations, as they provide their employees with development programmes in order to enhance their capabilities.

It is in this vein, Emeti (2015) citing Weihrich and Koontz, (2005), remarks that development is a long-term future-oriented programme with a focus on the provision of knowledge or skill within a specified area that is not necessarily job related while training is a learning activity which assists employees to perform their current jobs more efficiently. As stated in Boundless Business (n.d), bringing new employees on-board and providing them with enough resources for continued development is a strategic investment for organisation and the onus on HR to maintaining a developmental approach to existing human resources. As Vulpen, (2020) explains it, allowing an employee to develop themselves in skills they need for future activities is a crucial responsibility for HR. Doing this will bridge the cleavage between today's employee and the employee needed in the future. Traditionally, organisations usually set a budget for training and development which is then distributed amongst its employees.

To validate this claim, Vulpen (2020), explicates that, some countries mandated the budget. According to him, companies in the UK with an annual pay bill of more than £3 million pay a mandatory rate of 0.5% meant for the professional education of their employees. Furthermore, in countries like Belgium and Netherland, training and development fall under the employer's statutory obligations to take care of its workforce. While in the United States, it is an unregulated territory. Regardless of differences in regulations, almost all employers understand the value of investing in the skills of their employees. It is a core responsibility of the HR department in ensuring these efforts come to fruition.

Corroborating this, Asfaw, Argaw, and Bayissa (2015); Elnaga and Imran (2013); McDowall and Saunders (2010) acknowledge that training and development are the processes of investing in people so that they are equipped to perform well. The import from the above is that provision of training and development (internal training, education programmes, and conferences, etc) will keep employees afloat in their respective fields. There are certain factors shaping the quantity and quality of training and development activities in organisations, which include: the degree of change in the external environment, the degree of internal change, the availability of suitable skills within the existing workforce, and the extent to which management see training as a motivating factor in work (Asfaw, et al; 2015). Of course, change is constant and these changes permeate through every work of life including journalism. For example, change in government policies, legal framework, and change in production equipment requires media staff development.

In the same vein, the dynamic nature of journalism, most especially, in this era of technological advancement which has bridged the gap between forms of journalism, has also made media personnel to be converged and relevant in the scheme of things, as well as operation and application of media equipment; media personnel need not to lack self-development, skill and knowledge acquisition. In relation to this, Noe (2008); Frederick and Stephen (2010); Qayyum, Sharif, Ahmad, Khan, and Rehman (2012); Aina (2003) submit that, development and training are to equip the employee particularly the non-managerial employee with specific skills. They further state that media organisations can improve the performance of reporters, editors, and other professionals through training and development. It also helps them to cope with changes in production methods news programmes, production techniques in radio and television stations as a result of new technology already transforming events in the workplace. More so, media staff development brings about change within the organisations since media professionals are exposed to hazard as well as new methods of production with an attempt to innovate and bring about improved ways of doing things.

Based on the forgoing, opinions, and submissions of the scholars, staff development is therefore the most critical aspect of journalism which could be used to achieve the broadcasting organisation's strategic goals and objectives. Regardless of the above submissions, how staff development is being practiced in OGBC, Sweet, and Family FM radio stations becomes probable because there has not been empirical evidence in relation to the subject matter.

**Objectives of the Study**

The following are the specific objectives of the study:

- To ascertain the frequency of staff development and training in the selected radio stations.
- To investigate factors responsible for staff development and training in the selected radio stations.
- To determine the extent to which staff development enhancesproductivity in the selected radio stations.

**Theoretical Review**

Theory is a set of organized concepts, ideas, explanations, and precepts of human experiences. As Baran and Davies (2013:13) note, it is any organized set of concepts, explanation and principles of some aspects of human experience. Therefore, this study is anchored on the organisational learning theory.

According to Organizational Learning Theory (OLT), organisations are made up of people, who gives the impression of being on solid ground. Elozieuwa (2012), citing Senge (1990), defines a learning organisation as one in which people constantly expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thought are nurtured, where the collective is set free, and where people are constantly learning how to learn together. Therefore, staff development practice rests on the emergence of this theory. This theory, however, places emphasis on the fundamental function of personnel management on the need to invest on staff individually and collectively in order to improve the workforce needed by any organisation, thereby produce knowledge and skills.

Meanwhile, Ehronberg and Smith (1994), as cited in Elozieuwa (2012), posit that, knowledge and skills a worker has often come from education training, including years of input to the work and organisation, practically improve the staff on that development and in accordance with the organisational learning motive, the philosophy underpinning the learning organisation concepts, as expressed by Garvin (1993) in Ndibe (2014), is that learning is an essential ingredient, if, organisation are to survive, that learning at operational, tactical and strategic levels needs to be conscious, continuous and integrated.

Similarly, management is responsible for creating an emotional climate in which all employees can continuously learn. As a result of the benefits of organisational learning theory, staff development in the journalism profession is second to none, owing to the fact that the survival and best practise of the profession lies in the proper development of the staff. This act alone ensures the avoidance of lawsuits, effective and efficient productivity, and balanced reporting.

**Concept of Development and Training**

There is a symbiotic relationship between development and training because the two terms are interlocked. Thus, one term cannot be explained without the others. Elozieuwa (2012) distinguishes the two terms. According to him, training entails teaching organisational members how to carry out their tasks effectively and efficiently while also assisting them in acquiring the knowledge and skills required for a non-managerial position. Development, on the other hand, is more managerial in nature. It focuses on increasing organisational members' knowledge and skills so that they are ready to take on new responsibilities and challenges. Thus, development can be defined as the activity that leads to the acquisition of new knowledge and skills in order to grow. Many organisations offer employee development programmes to help them improve their skills.

In this regard, organisations must provide for continuous employee development in order to provide employees with adequate knowledge and skills (Khawaja & Nadeem 2013). In other words, different authors define training differently. It is the systematic acquisition and development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes required by employees to perform a task or job adequately or to improve performance in the workplace. Training can also be defined as the structured process by which organisations provide development to their employees and improve their quality in all aspects. According to Goldstein and Ford (2002), training is a systematic method of acquiring more knowledge and skills for the development and improvement of individuals and groups in order to increase organisational productivity.

According to Manju and Suresh (2011), training serves as an act of intervention to improve the quality of an organization's goods and services in the face of stiff competition by improving employees' technical skills. According

to Tiwari (2014), training has been extremely beneficial in increasing organisational productivity. It not only increases employee resourcefulness, but it also allows them to virtually learn their jobs and perform more competently. Observation shows that training is required to ensure an adequate supply of staff who are technically and socially competent and capable of progressing into specialist departments or management positions.

**Objectives of Staff Development and Training**

The main objectives of staff development as stated in Armstrong (2006); Nwachukwu (2009); Elozieuwa (2012), is to advance the competency of organisation's workforce as well as to improve their performance in order to grow and expand with the organisation and to meet up with future human resources need. The under-listed are some of the objectives.

a) **The fundamental objective** of staff development is to create all-encompassing relations between the staff and job description for optimum performance.

b) **Skills upgrading and prevention of obsolescence:** There is dynamism in jobs. The jobs are not stagnant. They often experience change without prior notice or awareness. For instance, the advancement of technology has drastically altered the processes of news and production as well as transmission. To meet up with the level of advancement of technology, media staff needs adequate training and development, so as to be updated with skills and knowledge.

c) **To increase productivity and for future assignments:** Naturally, employers want employees to be productive and perform optimally. Most of these are being taught when employees are being exposed to developmental programmes. During this programme how to increase output, higher quality, and creativity on the job will be addressed. However, most employees do not want to remain in one position for a long time, more reason while many are being developed and trained for future assignment. Doing this will also be earned them moving to new position they crave for.

**Staff Development Practice and Broadcast Media**

Training plays a significant role in achieving organisational objectives by keeping in view the interest of employees and organisation whereas, development focuses upon the activities that enhance employee skills for future. In the view of Khan et al. (2011), staff development is still a method that includes succession planning, mentoring, and coaching, among other things. Training appears to be the most important issue in any organisation today because it increases the effectiveness and efficiency of both employees and the organisation. From observation, journalism involves sophisticated equipment especially in this era of digitalization in relation to broadcast media where production and transmission of news are automated. Therefore, staff training and development in the face of this equipment and excellent performance in journalism becomes sin qua non for the staff of any media organisation that wants to survive the stiff competition. In this vein, Khan et al. (2011) state that employee performance is heavily influenced by a variety of factors; but the most important factor in all aspects of employee performance development is adequate training and development.

Furthermore, technological advancements have created opportunities for fifth columnists to write and publish anything news for public consumption, the majority of which is fake news or rumour. Often, these are done for character assassination, invasion of privacy, defamation of a personality, and espionage against the country with little or no understanding of journalism ethics and ethos. Therefore, to avert litigations of any sort, enhance job performance and because of the social contract between the society and mass media in relation to its primary functions (Educate, Inform, Entertain, surveillance, opinion moulding and so on) by giving upholding principles of ethical journalism, management of broadcast organisation need to training and re-training its work force for proper development.

In relation to the above, staff development, therefore, holds the key to unlock the potential growth and development opportunities to achieve a competitive edge. The above seems applicable to journalism practice because the nature of the profession is challenging as well as the use of machines and technologies being used for the production and dissemination of information are at an advanced stage based on this, staff development is very essential to journalism.

**Methodology**

This study adopted a survey research design while structured questionnaire was distributed to 60 respondents via a google survey form. The population for the study comprised (Family FM: 25; Sweet FM: 20 while OGBC has 146 staff) in order to have equal representation, total enumeration sampling techniques and quota sampling method was

used to get the sample size. The total population of Family FM and Sweet FM were used in line with Adeosun and Udabah (2013:136) citing Nnana (2003) that when the population of the respondents is not many, the whole population must be studied. As such, researchers selected 16% of all the staff of OGBC radio station. The decision to select 16% from the OGBC population was supported by Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) who stated that 10% - 30% of the population is appropriate for good reliability if this percentage is rationally chosen. Therefore, the intention of the total population sampling and 16% quota sampling was good enough to gather adequate data for this study. The statistical Package for the Social Science was used to analyze the data which was presented by using descriptive statistical tools of frequency, percentage, and chart.

**Data Presentation**

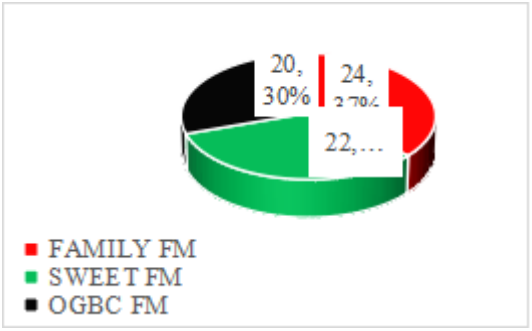



**Fig 1. Respondents' Station**

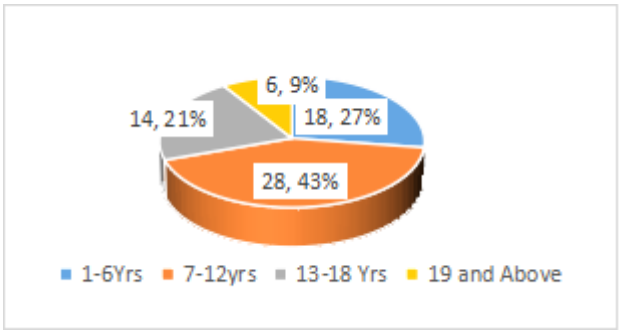
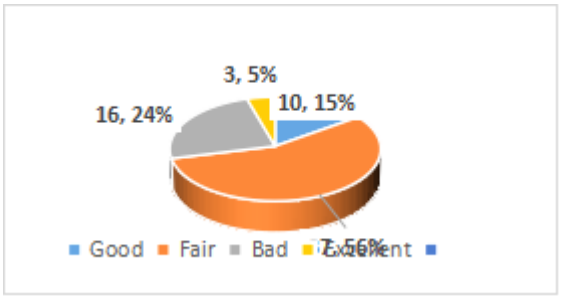



**Fig 2: Respondents' years of experience**




**Frequency of staff development since they join**

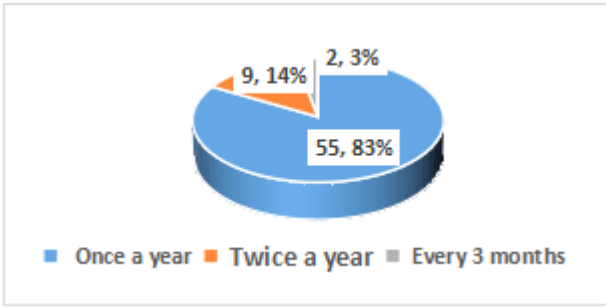



**Fig 3: Condition of staff development practice**

**Fig 4:**

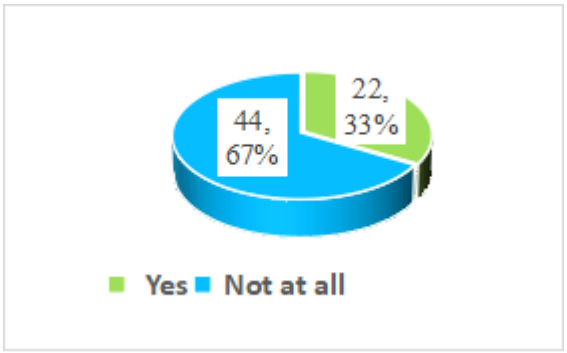



**Fig 5: Whether or not staff development beneficial to them.**

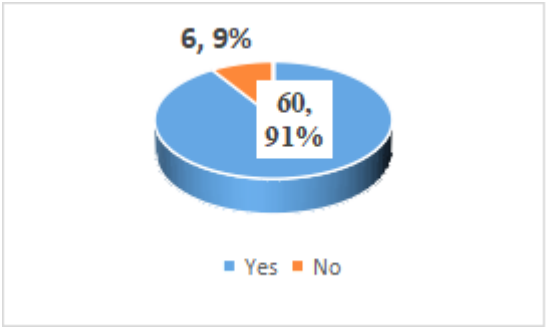



**Fig 6: Any influence of staff development on news Production on the selected stations?**

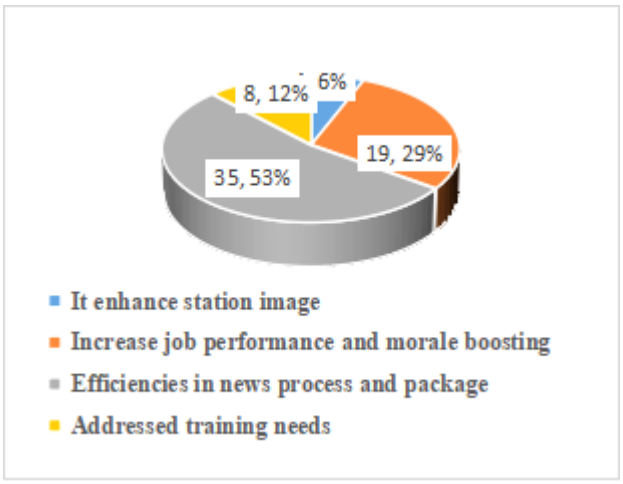



**Fig 7: Staff development on the news production**

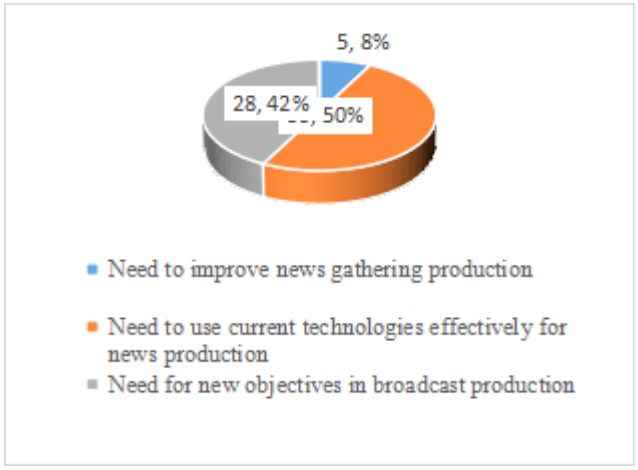



**Fig 8: Factors that influence staff development**

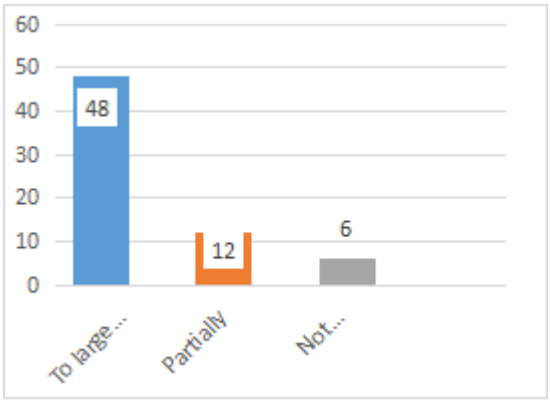



**Fig 9: Extent of station's consideration for staff development and enhancement productivity**

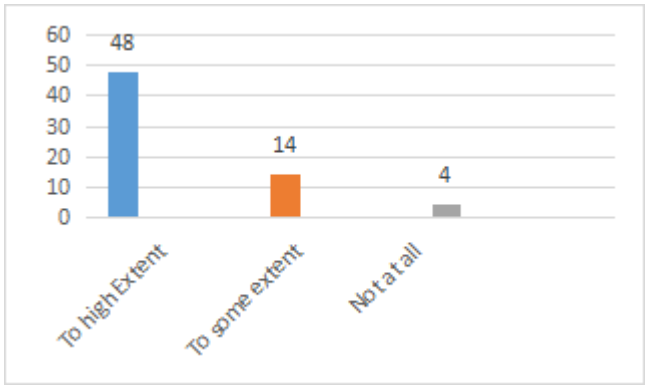



**Fig 10: Need for more staff development programme in the news production**

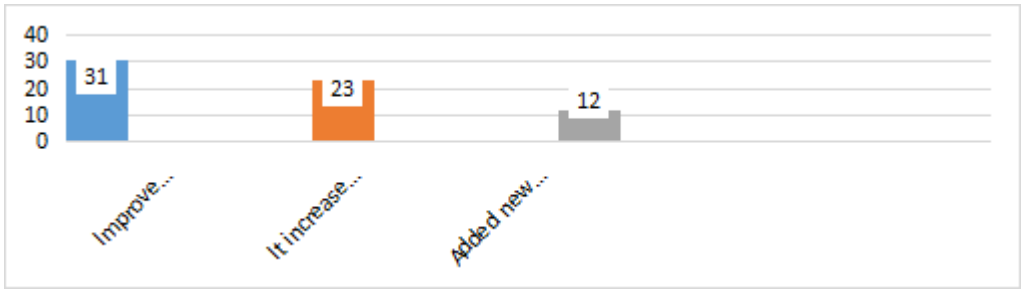



**Fig 11: Relationship between staff development & Broadcasting stations.**

**Discussion of Findings**

Fig 1: reveals, (37%) respondents work at family FM, (33%) Sweet FM, and (30%) OGBC. Fig 2: highlights that a significant number (43%) had between 7-12 years' work experience. Fig 3, shows that a little bit above average (56%) confirmed that, condition of staff development was fair enough. Fig 4: indicates that the majority (83%) remarked that, staff development is once a year in their stations. The above findings are in consonance with Obisi (2011), according to him, staff development is to enhance the skills, knowledge, and performance of employees in all

ramifications. While Glaveli and Karassavidou (2011) explained that, human resources growth put organisations on the vantage position of success.

Fig 5: highlights (67%) indicated that they have never benefited from the staff development programme. Fig 6: shows that the majority (91%) affirmed the influence of staff development on the news production and package. Fig 7: reveals more than average (53%) believed that staff development brings efficiency in news production and package. Fig 8: discloses, average number (50%) of the respondents confirmed that, the need to use current technologies effectively for news production, these findings somewhat align with the views of Khan, et al; (2011) who stated that training and development programmes are very key to the effectiveness and efficiency of every employee, as well as played a vital role as organizational performance. As established by Soahil, et al (2014), it is through training and development, that employee can get adequate and up to date knowledge and skills as well as the right attitude that can make employees perform their duty optimally , unfortunately, majority of the radio stations employees were not adequately exposed to development and training.

Fig 9: indicates majority (73%) acknowledged that, their station's consideration for staff development enhanced productivity to large extent. Fig 10: discloses that (73%) confirmed, need for more staff development programme in the news production. Fig 11, indicates that mixed grills as (47%) and (35%) respondents believed the relationship that exists between staff development and broadcasting stations was to improve skills and increase production output respectively. These findings are supported by Stephen and Bowley's (2007). According to them, the link between employee productivity and training will further lead to employee performance. Finding also in consonance with Ceylan, et al (2010) whose findings indicated that, an innovation of product and process and also in organization and employees creativity is directly related to the environment. Likewise, McKeon (2008) stated that the training/development of workers will ensure the innovativeness and effectiveness of workers.

**Conclusion**

Based on the findings the study concludes that condition of staff development practice was fair enough in all the broadcast stations as it is being carried out once in a year while major reasons behind staff development is to improve skills and increase production output in all the broadcast stations. Unfortunately, majority never benefited from the staff development programme.

**Recommendations**

The following are the recommendations suggested:

1. Advancement in technology and dynamic nature of broadcast journalism has somewhat change its the operations, therefore, management of radio stations need to increase the frequency in which they expose their staff for developmental programme so as keep them afloat of requisite skills and knowledge for optimal performance.
2. Since there are factors responsible for staff development, broadcast media need to intensify and expand their training and development programmes to a level where every worker is involved, and not only favoured ones. This will improve quality of personnel in order to meet up with global best practices.
3. It has been established that staff development will enhance productivity, therefore, broadcast stations must see adequate and regular training and developmental programmes for its workforce, in order to avert any breach of ethics.

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